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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARAMARIBO 000023

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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMED](#) [KFLO](#) [AMER](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: POST CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND
TRIPWIRES

REFS: (A) 05 STATE 219189; (B) 05 PARAMARIBO 764

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¶1. (SBU) Further to the readiness assessment of Government of Suriname (GOS) capabilities conveyed ref (b), post notes that the GOS avian flu working group, consisting of government entities and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), had not as of January 9 yet completed its promised avian flu epidemic response strategy. It has, however, begun a public awareness campaign, with statements by the Health Minister and information pages in newspapers. We remain in close contact with lead action offices at the Ministries of Health and Agriculture as well as with PAHO on Suriname's state of readiness, which so far has focused mainly on testing domestic poultry and export birds. The established exotic bird export market here has heightened GOS attention to the potential impact of the avian flu for domestic stakeholders.

¶2. (SBU) Health services and the hospital system would likely be quickly overwhelmed by a human AI outbreak, thus post's strategies for in-country case management will be based in home care and quarantine. Another complicating factor for post planning is that there are no/no direct commercial travel routes from Suriname to the United States, and established service via neighboring countries can be tenuous even in normal times. Assessing the wisdom of drawdown, should the situation in the United States even make such action wise, would also depend on the status of outbreaks in Trinidad, Curacao, and Guyana; we have exchanged contact information for avian flu working groups at these neighboring posts. There are also commercial connections, albeit lengthy, via Amsterdam, through neighboring French Guyana to Paris, and via Belem, Brazil, making our definition of "neighboring" links quite diverse. Competition for commercial seats would quickly be quite keen.

¶3. (SBU) This same geographic isolation and dependency on regional transport routes also creates uncertainties for estimating the amount of time that post can shelter in place, because even in ordinary times there can be supply gaps in consumable merchandise imports. Paramaribo is, however, a consumables post, meaning most Embassy homes generally have some food stocks, and have been reminded to think of food and water reserves already. Water reserve tanks holding 450 gallons of water are standard at Embassy residences.

14. (SBU) For tripwires, please see updated input on the TRIPS network on the classified server.

15. (SBU) The following general preparedness measures have been taken to date:

Regular consultation among "working group" members (DCM, RSO, CONS, POL/ECON, MGMT, CLO, GSO, Peace Corps, DATT, IMO, in this small embassy essentially the regular EAC plus the Health Unit).

Pol/econ and MED liaison with Government of Suriname Avian Flu Working Group and PAHO to monitor disease surveillance and community preparedness. As of January 9, GOS action plan not completed, but public information/awareness campaign has begun.

RSO, Consular, Med, MGMT develop and implement quarantine and embassy visitor screening plans so they will be ready if tripwires indicate they are needed.

MED shipping Tamiflu, secure storage plan established (store in Embassy safehaven); other essential supplies (as identified in coordination with RMO Bogota, ie masks, gloves, etc.) are on order.

Medical triage and biological agent plans being developed, drawing heavily on RMO/Bogota's input.

CONS maintains information links with Amcit community; to date information posted on Embassy web sites and included in quarterly warden letter. Informational meetings will follow, beginning with regularly scheduled warden meeting (February 06) unless evolution of situation requires more extensive meetings.

CLO to maintain links with local schools attended by Embassy

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dependents to advise on their preparedness. Tripwire plan includes suggested school closure thresholds.

Identified avian flu contacts in neighboring Embassies, given our dependence on interim stops to get to the United States, if that turns out to be a sensible option.

RMO offered a briefing to the official American community in a town hall meeting in December visit, advised households to buy gloves, hand sanitizer, and protective masks, and to think of modest food and water reserves. FSNs were briefed in regularly monthly meeting with DCM on January 11.

BARNES